Unveiling the Mysteries of Maya Civilization – Part 1

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The apocalypse signifies the complete destruction of a people, either by external forces or through self-destruction, leading to the collapse of an entire civilization. In our modern lives, we seldom contemplate this possibility, being confident it couldn't happen to us.

However, history reveals that some civilizations have already faced apocalyptic events. The remnants of once-great kingdoms, empires, and civilizations are scattered across the globe, including the ancient Egyptian kingdom, the Roman Empire, and the Sumerians. Factors like drought, conflict, and collapse played crucial roles in their rise and fall.

Among the most intriguing civilizations is the Maya, which thrived in the Central American rainforests for nearly 3000 years. Unlike a centralized empire, the Maya civilization consisted of rival city-states united by common languages, religion, and architecture. Even today, the mysteries of the Maya civilization continue to captivate archaeologists, making it one of the greatest civilizations the world has ever seen.

Around 500 CE, the Yucatán Peninsula was adorned with impressive stone cities, primarily concentrated in the southern lowlands of Guatemala. The Maya civilization reached its peak during this time, witnessing a surge in construction, larger cities, and intricate art. Notably, they engaged in sports, had stadia, and demonstrated advanced astronomical skills, accurately observing and mapping the movements of the stars.

The Maya's scientific and mathematical understanding surpassed that of the Western world during their era. Monumental structures featured intricate glyphs, including a massive mathematical table with calculations reaching into the billions. At the core of each Maya city was a revered figure – a divine king, considered a holy lord capable of communicating with ancestors and gods, ensuring the survival of their people.

To ensure their civilization's prosperity, the Maya engaged in human sacrifice, offering their own blood and that of others. This practice led to the civilization reaching remarkable heights. However, by 900 CE, their great cities were abandoned, and the Maya people nearly vanished.

The question arises: *What happened to the Maya civilization?*

In the early 16th century, Spanish conquistadors, led by Hernan Cortez, encountered the people of Central America. Driven by the pursuit of wealth and the desire to convert indigenous people to Christianity, the conquistadors, fervently Catholic, encountered the Maya along the Yucatán Peninsula. The Spanish were relentless in spreading their religious message, with Bishop Diego de Landa resorting to extreme measures, including torture and the burning of Maya books made of deerskin and tree bark, containing local myths. Despite efforts to destroy the Maya culture, the conquistadors struggled to eradicate the ruins of massive stone cities in the Yucatán.

As centuries passed, exploration of the jungles revealed more mysterious stone cities. In the early 19th century, Spanish author Antonio del Rio's report, describing overgrown and hidden abandoned cities in Central America, captivated Europe. This account inspired amateur archaeologists and explorers, John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood.

What awaited Stephens and Catherwood was beyond their expectations. Monuments, pyramids, temples, and stone houses emerged from beneath the rainforest, leaving them electrified and breathless. The revelation continued as they journeyed through the rainforest, discovering one stone city after another, each displaying breathtaking construction.

Across these sites, intricate carvings resembling hieroglyphs adorned the structures. It became evident that this was an entire civilization sharing common iconography. What made it even more astonishing was that this iconography was entirely unique, unlike anything seen before. Although reminiscent of hieroglyphs, it was distinct from Egyptian ones, indicating a brand-new form of expression originating from the Mesoamericans.

Stephens and Catherwood's Journey through Maya Secrets…